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Preservation of Community College Logic: Organizational Responses to State Policies and Funding Practices in Three States

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Abstract

Objective: With both policy pressures from state governments, including states' funding behaviors, and the logic of the institution deeply ingrained over decades, community colleges face considerable challenge in reconciling conflicting values and requirements. Yet, as organizations they adapt to survive, and outcomes of adaptation may lead to an alteration of mission and identity. The purpose of this field methods research investigation is to explore and explain three states' policies (California, Washington, and Hawai'i) and the variance in three community colleges' organizational responses to these policies in the period of 2000-2014. **Method:** Data include observations, policy documents, organizational documents, and interviews of administrators and faculty at three community colleges. **Results:** Findings indicate that the policies and practices of these three states pushed economic, political, and social agendas onto their respective community colleges and imposed liberal market ideals and businesslike behaviors on these institutions. Individual colleges responded to external pressures from the state both by compliance with state requirements and through actions to adjust to state funding reductions. However, in so doing, community colleges endeavored to adhere to the institutional logic of the community college, which in some cases resulted in a blending of logics, the logic of the community college and the logic of neoliberalism. **Contributions:** This investigation holds implications for community college scholarship and for policy makers: Individual

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state characteristics need to be taken into consideration in research on community colleges and for the design of education policies.

Keywords
state policy, funding, institutional logic, community college values, neoliberalism

Over the past two decades, neoliberal reforms have swept through public higher education (Seddon, Ozga, & Levin, 2013), and community colleges have not been immune from liberal market practices (Campbell & Pedersen, 2001; Crouch, 2011; Quiggin, 2010). These trends have potentially altered the seminal attributes of education and training through the replacement of these attributes with economic values and profit motives (Ball, 2012). Yet, individual organizations responded to these neoliberal reforms in various ways with diverse outcomes. Although the scholarly literature tends to treat community colleges, as well as their students, administrators, and faculty, as a homogeneous group (Levin, Viggiano, López Damián, Morales Vázquez, & Wolf, 2017), individual differences among organizations are not only a consequence of organizational history, culture, and demographics but also depend upon what Mintzberg has termed "systems of influence" (Mintzberg, 1983, p. 22) and "configurations" (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 94). Indeed, as highly adaptive institutions (Levin, 2001), community colleges respond to external pressures. When there is a lack of fit between the organization and its environment, community colleges adapt to restore their equilibrium and improve congruency and balance between the organization and the environment (Cameron, 1984). External pressures from state governments, both in the form of policies and practices, push community colleges toward organizational adaptation. However, adaptive responses by community colleges are carried out in accordance with institutional logics (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012) of the community college (Levin, 2017).

Institutional logics are the dominant meaning or belief systems of an institutional type (Hinings, 2012; Scott, 2014), whereas college mission, organizational identity, and organizational culture are organizationally or college specific (Levin, 2001, 2017). Institutional logics are "rule-like structures that constrain organizations or a set of cultural toolkits that provide opportunities for change in existing structures and practices" (Scott, 2014, p. 81). Institutional logics provide for organizational stability because they both lead to and reinforce organizational practices and social interactions. Institutional logics guide and indeed shape behaviors of organizational members as they pursue goals (Thornton et al., 2012). As well, logics are the foundation for the ways in which institutions function and carry out their purposes. Because these institutional logics are deeply entrenched within an organization, they contain taken-for-granted assumptions about organizational life and the purposes of the organization (Scott, 2014). Elements of the dominant community college logic include historical principles such as access to educational opportunities for adults, a comprehensive curriculum, a community or local orientation, a commitment to teaching, and a focus

upon students as learners (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013; Levin, 2001, 2017). The actors in community colleges tend to adhere readily to the logic of a community college and accept these assumptions. College norms, practices, routines, and rules, for example, are shaped by logics, and thus, the behaviors and actions of organizational members reinforce the logic and perpetuate organizational identity (Scott, 2014). Community college scholars have noted that the norms and practices of college personnel, such as student affairs staff, follow the ethics of care (Levin & Montero-Hernandez, 2009; Smith, 2000; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Valadez, 1993), and these norms and practices reinforce community college logics.

Institutional logics at the organizational level are interpreted and enacted by organizational members in the context of systems of influence within an organization (Mintzberg, 1983). Systems of influence (Mintzberg, 1983) shape organizational behaviors, and neoliberal ideology is one system of influence that has considerable power in affecting behaviors in educational institutions (Ball, 2012; Seddon et al., 2013; Ward, 2012). Although neoliberal ideology is embedded in state higher education policies and practices (Ball, 2012; Ward, 2012), community colleges' responses to these policies differ, suggesting a high level of differentiation in organizational behaviors among community colleges.

Our investigation addresses the ways in which community colleges respond to neoliberal or market logics in state policies and practices, in the period of 2000-2014. We explain three states' policies (California, Washington, and Hawai'i) and the variance in three community colleges' organizational responses to these policies in the period of 2000-2014. We employ institutional logics theory to argue that when new dominant logics infiltrate community colleges, individual organizations may respond by blending logics or replacing established logics (Thornton et al., 2012). However, in some contexts, the blending or replacement of logics (although they may be rooted in organizational survival efforts) may have negative implications for the core mission or missions of the community college.

Conceptual and Theoretical Literature

In the late 1980s and 1990s, U.S. federal and state policies shifted community colleges toward global economic competitiveness and in the process reframed the mission of the community college toward economic goals (Levin, 2001). The term neoliberalism was applied to reform projects in the public sector, and was applied to higher education institutions (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Levin, 2007; Misiaszek, Jones, & Torres, 2011). Crouch (2011) identified market principles as the standard for social and institutional judgment, so that the only important goals were profit goals, aligning institutions with a liberal market (Flew, 2014). In the neoliberal institution, everything is a commodity (Brown & Carasso, 2013), and profit and cost cutting motivate behaviors (Ball, 2012). Institutional judgments, scholars noted, were based upon profit goals and conformed to business standards of performance (Crouch, 2011; Quiggin, 2010; Ward, 2012). Furthermore, the Great Recession of 2008 (Rampell, 2009) may have provided an opportunity structure for state governments both to decrease funding to community

colleges and to target resources, particularly new resources acquired after economic recovery, to individual colleges and systems. Based upon resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), then, community colleges with their high level of economic dependency upon state governments are vulnerable to their major resource provider—the state. Thus, in line with this theory, they are not only directed by the state but also must conform to state expectations.

Critics suggest that neoliberal policies in higher education allow for the rationalization of inequality and erode the legitimacy of higher education institutions as places of access, social mobility, and equity (The Century Foundation, 2013; Corak, 2012). Given community colleges' open access mission, this argument is particularly relevant. Furthermore, the suggestion is that the state's neoliberal goals are replicated through the "commitments, choices and obligations" (Ball, 2012, p. 35) of public sector actors. That is, administrators and faculty at community colleges internalize states' neoliberal goals and their adaptive responses are conformist.

Set in juxtaposition to neoliberal ideology, community colleges as institutions possess foundational characteristics and reflect historical principles that sustain their survival, shape their development, and mark them as unique institutions that occupy their own field (Levin, 2000). These characteristics and principles comprise the institutional logic, or dominant logic, of the community college. The label of "democracy's college" (Diekhoff, 1950), for example, reflects the community college principle of open access and the promise of opportunity for those whose material or personal conditions, or both, do not permit other avenues to postsecondary education. Behaviors that are congruent with this principle, such as recruitment of and services for underserved student populations, reinforce an organization's identity as a community college.

As well as access, a second central label associated with the community college logic is *community*, although the term has been stretched and compressed, beginning with the Truman Commission's first national articulation of the institution as *community college* (Gilbert & Heller, 2013; President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). Community has been used to refer to the principle of serving local populations, local and regional economic development, and democratic forms of governance, with community participation in college functioning, and to promote global connections both through international education and international development (Cohen et al., 2013; Levin, 2001). A third salient label used to characterize the community college is comprehensive curriculum, which refers to the broad array of curricular offerings from adult basic education and English as a Second Language to university parallel courses and technical and occupational training programs (Cohen et al., 2013). Indeed, some scholars define the mission of the community college based upon its curricular focus (Cross, 1985; Cross & Fiedler, 1989).

In the 1990s and 2000s, community colleges were viewed and understood by scholars and practitioners as teaching institutions, including both education and training, financially affordable, locally accessible, and as having open access for those who could benefit from postsecondary and adult education (Bogart, 1994; Bragg, 2001;

Grubb et al., 1999). Even those critics of the community college's performance (e.g., Brint & Karabel, 1989) did not reject the characteristics or principles of the community college, such as the open access mission and the promise of further education. Yet, state policies and practices in the 2000s required community colleges to adapt to the extent that the logic of the community college was threatened. There have been signs of neoliberal practices in the community colleges since the late 1980s, which increased in the 1990s and 2000s—for example, the reliance upon student tuition for revenues and an emphasis upon business and industry relations (Levin, 2001). The community college logic and neoliberal values started to blend in the community college regardless of organizational differences among colleges (Levin, 2001, 2017). However, the questions of how different states advanced neoliberalism for community colleges and how community colleges responded to these demands, particularly in recent years, remain unanswered.

Two research questions guided this investigation:

Research Question 1: What were the demands of a neoliberal state, particularly the three states in this investigation, on community colleges in the 2000s that threatened the dominant logic of the community college?

Research Question 2: In what ways did organizational members of community colleges explain their organization's responses to these state policies and practices, and what were the differences among the three community colleges?

Method

This specific investigation was extrapolated from a larger study that used field research methods (Burgess, 1984; Mason, 2002) to investigate longitudinal institutional change of seven North American community colleges (four located in Canada and three in the United States) over a 25-year period. This present investigation focused upon three states in the United States and three community colleges (formerly investigated over the 1989-1999 period) within those states. Consistent with Cohen et al.'s (2013) description of community colleges, we considered the research sites as typical community colleges in the United States, and specifically in the Western United States: They were public, had a comprehensive curriculum, and contained a diverse student body. In addition, the three colleges were located in or adjacent to large urban environments with a high level of immigrant populations. We investigated these three colleges during the period of 2000-2014 to ascertain the intentions and effects of state policies on organizational behaviors with particular attention to the effects of neoliberalism and the Great Recession of 2008. As a field methods investigation, this research entailed researcher interaction with sites and site members, observations, and collection of documents. We utilized qualitative field methods for data collection and analysis (Burgess, 1984; Erickson, 1986; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2013). The use of more than one source of data (i.e., document analysis, observations, and interviews) enabled us to triangulate our data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) and answer our research questions.

Data Collection

The first phase of the investigation entailed the collection and review of 2000 to 2014 state policies to identify community college initiatives and priorities. Documents included state higher education legislation, state community college system strategic plans, and community college documents (e.g., budget reports) that referred to budget allocations from the state, as well as other revenue streams. In addition, individual organizational documents were reviewed and included annual reports, strategic plans, and collective bargaining agreements. The second phase, carried out in 2013 and 2014, included both observations and interviews. This phase engaged faculty and administrators at three community college sites in the states of California, Washington, and Hawai'i to gather their perspectives. Observations of campuses and researcher interactions were captured in a journal. Consistent with field methods practices, the researcher related these observations both to scholarly literature and theory. Participants for interviews were selected to provide a cross-section of perspectives (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, full-time or part-time status, faculty or administrator rank) and were acquired via email correspondence. Purposive sampling of faculty was carried out to meet criteria, including members' knowledge of organizational actions (e.g., committee membership, department chairing). Interviews of institutional faculty and administrators, including executive-level administrators, lasted between 60 and 90 minutes; we interviewed 14 administrators (three of them twice) and 15 faculty. The total number of participants was 29. At the California college, four administrators and five faculty were interviewed. At the Washington college, four administrators and four faculty were interviewed. At the Hawai'i college, six administrators and six faculty were interviewed. At all three sites, the chief executive officer of the system was one of the administrators interviewed. The interview guide included topics such as personal and professional background information, perspectives on state policies, and organizational responses to state policies and practices, as well as outcomes of organizational actions. In particular, each interviewee was asked to reflect upon alterations in several areas at the state level (e.g., governance, finance, and policy) and college level (e.g., governance and management, curriculum, and students) over the period of 2000-2014.

Data Analysis

The principal researcher carried out initial data analysis of interviews, state policies, and college documents. In a second round of analysis, three doctoral students and the principal researcher carried out content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) of higher education policy documents for California, Washington, and Hawai'i. We coded documents from the 2000-2014 period on government, nongovernment (e.g., foundations), and organizational priorities for the three colleges. We used content analysis to "mak[e] replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). Following Krippendorff's (2004) approach to content analysis, we unitized data into segments of analysis, then sampled, coded,

reduced the data, inferred phenomenon using our analytical constructs, and generated answers to our research questions. Content analysis provided us with a mechanism to examine "linguistically constructed facts" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 75) about characteristics, relationships, behaviors, and conditions evident within the documents.

For document analysis, we developed a coding scheme based on qualitative data analysis techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Miles et al., 2014) and used concepts drawn from neoliberalism (Ball, 2012; Crouch, 2011; Quiggin, 2010; Ward, 2012) to create a 10-category coding structure. These categories included the following: competition, dismantling or eroding of social welfare, liberal or free market, individual benefit, individual economic worth, performativity, privatization, reduced government responsibility, reduced social expectations, and state intervention. Table 1 describes the data that were included in each category. We used these 10 categories for document analysis and interview data.

We performed as well an analysis of interview data using narrative analysis (Riessman, 2002), also referred to as "narratives-under-analysis" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 209). Following the principles of this approach, we analyzed the narratives of the participants themselves—without seeking the creation of our own narration as a product of research. With analysis of narrative, stories are considered data, and themes may be derived from stories (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). Thus, narrative analysis is an interpretive approach to analysis (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). Narrative analysis allowed us to capture the representations of institutional life and history (Riessman, 1993, 2002) from the point of view of individual faculty and administrators. Narrative analysis illuminated responses of individual colleges to pressures from state policies and practices, and detailed the outcomes of these responses.

During this round of analysis, we adopted the concept of institutional logics as an analytical framework to explain patterns in the data (i.e., community college logic). We identified participants' descriptions of changes in the principles of the community college (e.g., open access, local orientation, comprehensive curriculum, commitment to teaching) as a result of policy and state expectations. The purpose of this analysis, however, was not to identify the process of segregation, blending, or replacement of logics (Thornton et al., 2012) for each of these colleges. Indeed, that activity, while valuable, was outside the scope of our investigation. We sought instead to identify what was sacrificed as a result of the blending or replacement of the traditional logic of the community college in the face of neoliberal logic and the ways in which that tension played out differently at our investigative sites.

Finally, we conducted a comparative analysis, and examined differences across both states and colleges. In this final round of analysis, we integrated data to draw conclusions for all three colleges (and all three states) and we separated data by state and college within that state. We relied heavily upon both the former investigation (1989-1999) and upon more recent literature on the states and the colleges, including institutional documents (Levin, 2017) to structure the findings of this investigation.

In this investigation, we address adaptive responses of three community colleges in three states—California, Washington, and Hawai'i and refer to each college with a pseudonym: Suburban Valley Community College (SVCC) in California, City South

Table 1. Theory-Based Categories Used for Data Analysis.

Category	Code	Data coded
Competition	(C)	Rivalry between organizational members or institutions for the purpose of achieving benefits
Dismantling social welfare	(DW)	Reduction in, or decreased access to, developmental or community programs
Individual worth	(IW)	Preferential treatment for one person, or a particular group of people, because of the value of their perceived identity
Free market	(FM)	Participation by the organization in the economic marketplace; includes competitive bidding
Individual benefit	(IB)	Personal gain or differential treatment for one individual
Performativity	(PF)	Structured performance of individuals or organizations, including measurable outcomes, with expectations for efficiency and productivity
Privatization	(P)	Strategies for revenue generation that deviated from traditional government appropriations (e.g., grant funding, international student recruitment, and partnerships with private industry)
Reduced social expectations	(RS)	Refers to society or group's missing or lower aspirations for societal benefits, such as health care, or pensions or services. Expansive mission of the community college was shrinking, likely a result of reduction in societal expectations
Reduced government responsibility	(RG)	Reduction in funds and other forms of support from the state to individual colleges
State intervention	(SI)	Outside government or government-affiliated body's exertion of power over the organization

Community College (CSCC) in Washington, and Pacific Suburban Community College (PSCC) in Hawai'i. Organizational members are referred to by their job titles or roles. Actual names of the colleges and the faculty and administrators are omitted to preserve anonymity as required by our research protocol.

Findings

The policies and practices of these three states pushed economic, political, and social agendas on their respective community colleges and simultaneously impressed liberal market ideals and businesslike behaviors on these institutions. Policies in the three states emphasized efficiency, measurable outcomes (i.e., degree completion), and workforce development with slightly different emphases. Individual colleges responded to external pressures from the state both by compliance with state requirements and through actions to adjust to state funding reductions. However, in so doing,

community colleges endeavored to adhere to the institutional logic of the community college which in some cases resulted in a blending of logics.

California

California's community colleges have an acclaimed history dating back to the early 1990s wherein the state enabled its population access to higher education coupled with meaningful financial and programmatic support (Douglass, 2000; Meier, 2013). However, the passage of State Assembly Bill (SB) 1456, the 2012 Student Success Act, following the Great Recession of 2008 (Rampell, 2009), can be considered the culmination of the movement away from the onus of access to, and support for, higher education (Geiger, 2005). The Student Success Act reflected a larger national policy discourse on completion, efficiency, and economic development for community colleges, values in line with neoliberal logic.

Following the fiscal crisis of 2008, California's community colleges faced budget cuts totaling US$1.5 billion between fiscal years 2008 and 2012 (Bohn, Reyes, & Johnson, 2013). As a result of these budgetary restrictions, California community colleges adopted policies centered on increased support for and attention to those students designated as possessing the most potential to succeed, or complete, in an increasingly competitive economic, as well as academic, environment. While support and attention were focused on students deemed most likely to complete programs, those programs for historically vulnerable populations (e.g., first-generation students and students with disabilities) experienced dramatic cuts to their state funding allocations. In many cases, these programs saw budgetary reductions of over 40% in fiscal year 2009-2010, as compared with previous years' allocations (Contreras, 2013; Farr, 2010).

These cuts came on the heels of a period, 2000-2008, during which there was a deliberate movement away from the diversity and access missions of community colleges to an emphasis upon course, program, and degree completion. Public accountability was ascendant. The passage of California's Assembly Bill 1417 (State of California, 2004) established the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges program that required the system's Board of Governors to recommend performance metrics to evaluate attainment of favored targets and efficiencies, such as progress to degree or transfer. In 2012, the state responded to both community pressures and revenue shortfalls with the passage of SB 1456, The Student Success Act. SB 1456 shifted state policy in a manner that advantaged high achieving students over those students who did not meet performance standards or conform to expected behaviors for college completion. Under SB 1456, students who completed an educational plan and made measurable progress, as defined by the state, received certain institutional advantages, such as priority registration. However, students who failed to identify a program of study or make meaningful academic progress had support removed, either at an institutional level (e.g., reductions in budgetary allocations) or at an individual level (e.g., loss of priority registration). The rationing of instructional and support services under SB 1456 was part of a larger discourse in state policies in favor of economic and workforce development in light of ongoing financial constraints.

Consequently, California community colleges were expected to embrace organizational efficiency, reward individual achievement, and focus efforts on completion and economic development.

To adapt to state policies and practices, SVCC moved from historical concerns over access to concerns over student performance and outcomes. State funding reductions between the years 2008 and 2012 led to a reduction in instruction and student support services. Post 2012, an increase in state funding resulted in some activities and populations gaining privilege over others. This stratification of student populations reached its zenith after the 2012 Student Success Act (SB 1456) and further privileged a group of students. The chancellor of the community college district that oversaw SVCC indicated that the message from the state government was clear: "The state told us, 'Your priorities are now transfer, basic skills, and career technical education, and do not spend your scarce resources on lifelong learning, community services, those kinds of things.'" Thus, full-time students in programs that led to associate degrees and either careers or university transfer were the primary interest of the state, and SVCC had to respond and adapt. The response to the Student Success Act on campus was varied, but decidedly negative. According to a department chair, faculty interpreted the priorities message from the state as an indication "that the community college is no longer a community college." The department chair identified two key changes, "a workload increase [and] . . . real core changes to our mission as an institution." The emphasis upon particular student populations was noted by a dean as an efficiency measure: "What they're trying to do is to get people to enroll full-time because full-time students are more successful and it all stems from being more efficient with your money."

Resistance to the Student Success Act did not occur. Passivity, then, was a form of compliance, as noted by a department chairperson.

> A lot of the fight is out of us. I feel like I'm on a mode where I'm going to devote as little energy and angst as possible. I'm going to do the minimum of what's asked of me in terms of the bureaucratic requirements.

Both the Student Success Act and funding were conjoined because the legislation made it clear that funding for the college was tied to compliance with the strictures of the act. A program coordinator noted, "we go along with it because there's funding tied to it." That is, there was compliance and not acceptance because of the financial dependency of the college on the state.

The responses to financial reductions from the state led to an institutionalized process of rationalization of programs, with unintended consequences such as low morale and discontentment. The SVCC President established the Institutional Planning and Budget Process, to determine priority areas for deleting, curtailing, or maintaining programs, units, and activities of the college. The process served as a faculty and administrator effort to terminate inefficient and ineffective programs, and more importantly to save money. The committee communicated directly to program area personnel, and the communication for several was a death sentence for their program. A college dean conveyed the views of the Planning and Process committee: "'We've

studied your program reviews for a long time and your enrollment is down, down, down, all the time and we've been dumping resources . . . and things haven't changed'" The process led not only to program deletion but also to low morale for a large population of faculty and administrators at SVCC, as conveyed by the college president: "There was a lot of loss and at the same time people were constantly trying to reorganize and figure out 'Ok . . . we have to work together. How are we going to do this?'" Two participants reflected on the elimination of programs and layoff of employees—a process they described as a demoralizing, inquisition-like event. A Science faculty member explained this demoralization: "I've never seen such discontent in my many years." Deletion of programs and course offerings and increases in class sizes were the material consequences of diminished state funding and policy priorities; there was an emotional toll on the college community as well.

In the 2000s, SVCC deemphasized the public communication of achievements of the college and instead emphasized the measurement and assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs). Pressure from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) motivated SVCC's actions and emphasis upon outcomes such as completion. A Business faculty member gave one example of this pressure and the shift in faculty focus from program development to assessment of student learning.

> We've gotten to the point where they're scoring departments based on SLOs (Student learning outcomes). It's really been an emphasis focusing on SLOs, assessing learning outcomes in individual classes and then across the entire department, looking at the whole program. We're always doing reviews of our programs. . . . The time that the faculty spend on their jobs I feel like it's a little bit a balloon., so if they say, "You need spend a lot more time doing SLOs." Well then what happens is they spend less time doing other things. So, SLOs have grown to take up a larger percentage of the time we spend thinking about our programs and classes

This focus upon accounting for student outcomes shifted faculty time away from a focus on curriculum and instruction—affecting the education of students negatively.

Noncompliance held significant consequences. A department chair explained, "We were basically told, 'If you don't do this we're going to lose our accreditation.' That was the message that was hammered and hammered and hammered for two solid years." There was distaste among faculty for accounting for student learning. A department chair lamented, "This is the notion that we are not professionals; that's what we are being told, and I find that ridiculous." Nevertheless, there was compliance with the demands.

SVCC attempted to preserve its access mission by providing programming for underserved populations. The college president explained mission preservation, particularly the maintenance of developmental education: "We have developed extremely robust developmental programs in English language and composition. In Mathematics, we've developed entirely new pedagogical approaches that attempt to engage students who come in with less than college level skills." Yet, the social mission of SVCC was

under attack. To protect this social mission, SVCC cut in areas, and faculty and administrators took on additional workloads as noted by the college president.

> Every year they (the state) hit us; every year we came back with the best we can. We did eliminate. We eliminated an Office/Computer Sciences program; we eliminated technical writing; we eliminated the co-op program; we eliminated the career center; we consolidated our entire student success tutorial program. We lost 32 half-time staff that had been doing the writing tutorials. Every time anyone ever quit, any dean who left, we would just not fill the position, for months sometimes. We were consolidating. We had one dean of Environmental Biological Health Sciences and Applied Technology. It's insane.

In an attempt to satisfy (or blend) a neoliberal logic under changed revenue conditions while salvaging the mission and logic of the community college, SVCC increased class sizes and shifted focus toward completion outcomes rather than curriculum and instruction—thereby compromising educational quality. With more students in courses, with fewer administrators to support both instruction and students, and with an increased onus upon faculty to satisfy state accountability measures and an accrediting agency's oversight, the mission and the logic of the community college could not be sustained with integrity. Indeed, the social mission of SVCC—which included service to communities and the students from those communities—could not be fulfilled adequately.

Washington

In Washington, in the early 1990s, community and technical colleges (CTCs) became part of a system separated from both the public secondary schools and the universities (Washington State, 1991, 1992). From its inception, the CTCs system included colleges that provided literacy education, basic skills, occupational education, technical training, and university transfer (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges [WSBCTC], 2015). This system was coordinated by the Washington State Board. Current policies for CTCs flowed out of the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board [WHECB], 2007), which delineated the role of higher education: to enhance economic growth and social mobility in the state and respond to industry and employers' demands. CTCs prioritized students' university transfer and institutional mobility, or swirling (whereby students moved among CTCs), credentials, customized programs, and institutional assessment.

In documents of the WSBCTC (2010), the role of CTCs was tied to the development of job skills, and CTCs' programs and courses were expected to be designed to respond to the state's economic and students' needs (e.g., asynchronous access to class content) and preferences (e.g., interest in a productive activity). In these documents, students were viewed as consumers and education was depicted as a product. Accordingly, the WHECB's reports (e.g., *A skilled and educated workforce 2011*

update: An assessment of the number and type of higher education and training credential required to meet employer demand) signaled the need for strategies that attracted students to consume (or select) specific programs or majors that responded to the job market demands (WHECB, 2012a, 2012b; WHECB, WSBCTC & Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board [WTECB], 2011).

By following an efficiency rationale, CTCs were expected to serve a larger number of students and maintain minimal costs for the state (WHECB, 2011a; WSBCTC, 2010). The WSBCTC urged college leaders to adopt an evidence-based approach to assessment and accountability practices, and to increase transparency, improve quality in programs and instruction (Jenkins, Wachen, Kerrigan, & Mayer, 2012), and reduce expenditures (WSBCTC, 2010). The Student Achievement Initiative of 2007, for example, was created to incentivize CTCs through funding to improve student outcomes (i.e., transfer and completion rates), as well as student performance in programs that were necessary for transfer or degree completion (Jenkins et al., 2012). In these policies, successful CTCs were those with high transfer rates that allowed swirling and avoided credit loss in the process (WHECB, 2011b). In the period of 2008-2013, CTCs were described more as workforce providers and less as access and democracy-oriented higher education institutions.

State demands and local market conditions were the context of CSCC's actions: CSCC was focused on skills development and credentials that responded to market demands in the form of students and labor force needs. CSCC's focus upon meeting local market needs rested with the development of baccalaureate programs in applied fields, which were viewed as a source of economic development for the state, and as a mechanism to increase enrollments and produce credentials at City South. The CSCC district chancellor explained this mechanism as well as the intentions for community development: "More kids from high school [will enroll] . . . for our baccalaureate degrees. . . . Our thought was: raise aspirations." Baccalaureate degrees addressed high-level skills to satisfy labor market demands, and they were technically focused. According to a senior administrator, these degrees were "appropriate BAS [Bachelor of Applied Science] degrees [not offered by the] University of Washington [or] Washington State [University]." The baccalaureate degree, a more valued credential than the associate's degree (a traditional community college credential), met the need for skills development at a higher level than traditional vocational programs. These degrees expanded the vocational and career technical mission of the college, albeit in a limited way because of low student numbers, and had the potential to push CSCC toward the 4-year sector. Yet, by 2014, such a move had not occurred, and CSCC was firmly entrenched in its community college identity.

City South's members acknowledged that the current performance-based funding strategies of the state had consequences for all CTCs. Performance-based funding was enacted statewide, and each year the state withheld a standard amount of money from each community college. As a result, community colleges would compete to regain those funds. A CSCC administrator described this funding mechanism.

> They take 50,000 dollars per college and they put it in this pot and then that money gets allocated based on performance. And it's called a Student Achievement Initiative . . . They publish the data for all the colleges and [there is] competition among . . . colleges not to look bad.

In addition, CSCC received funding based upon student enrollment. A science faculty member who was a committee leader commented on the common problem of performance-based funding.

> The only performance that I've heard of is that when they decide how much money to give us they look at what we did last year for [enrollment] and if we don't hit our target then we could lose money.

City South's district chancellor viewed performance funding as a combination of effort from the state government. "Our state board is pushing more for performance funding . . . I think the legislature's pushing also for that." The chancellor tied this funding to student achievement, driven by the Gates Foundation and other states' approaches to funding. Performance-based funding in Washington aligned the colleges with a neoliberal environment.

Financial scarcity and college members' attempts to increase resources and to cope with scarcity contextualized CSCC's response to state policy in the 2000s—skills development, accountability for student outcomes, and efficiency in college operations. From 2009 to 2012, there were unprecedented reductions in state allocations (WHECB, 2012a), and low student enrollments confounded financial problems. City South sought to offset state reductions with grants, but these grants were short-term solutions. As a result, CSCC turned to other strategies to increase enrollments and, consequently, revenues. A senior administrator explained CSCC's strategies, which included the development of new programs (i.e., baccalaureate programs) and the recruitment of international students.

> The campuses are all down in enrollment, so they're looking for extra heads. . . . And you can sell international. . . . This [new baccalaureate program] is another winner because now you're increasing your FTE count as well. . . . [The state will] give you FTE for it. . . . I see a continued growth in these applied baccalaureate degrees.

But the more profound problem for CSCC was its loss of local student enrollments, especially given that the mission of the college continued as an access mission for underserved populations. For the loss of student enrollments, CSCC faced double consequences: First, under state formula funding, the college would lose resources commensurate with student declining numbers; second, under its mission to provide education and training to its communities, CSCC was decreasing its services and failing to provide access for an economically and socially challenged population.

The scarcity of resources undermined CSCC's ability to live up to its historical role as a community college with a training focus (Levin, 2001). Pressures from the state in the form of reduced funding, a changing industrial base locally and internationally,

with new workforce needs, and a diminishing student population, in part due to CSCC's problematical identity as an aspiring transfer institution, a baccalaureate institution, and a workforce development institution, challenged the institutional legitimacy of CSCC as a postsecondary institution and eroded its identity as a community college. CSCC members continued to embrace the dominant logic of the community college in their actions. However, community college principles, including a community focus and a comprehensive curriculum, were threatened by the erosion and loss of resources.

Hawai'i

The administration of community colleges in Hawai'i resides with the University of Hawai'i (UH; 2015), the state's public postsecondary education system that in 2014 was composed of seven regional community colleges and three universities spread across four islands (Hawai'i, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai). In the 2000s, Hawai'i higher education policy was torn in two different directions, governed by two sets of values that were not always compatible. Indeed, the logic of the community college, with emphasis upon community needs, particularly social needs, was threatened by an emphasis in state higher education policy on both training needs of the state and liberal market values of revenue generation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, accountability, competition, and SLOs (State Board for Career Technical Education, 2014; University of Hawai'i Innovation Council [UHIC], n.d.).

During this period, state policies instructed the UH's community colleges "to provide the trained workforce needed in the State, the region, and internationally by offering occupational, technical, and professional courses and programs which prepare students for immediate employment and career advancement" (UH, 2006. p. 1). Yet those values aligned with community needs were not abandoned but rather embedded within policy documents. Hawaiian higher education policy represented a hybridization of neoliberal ideology and Hawaiian cultural values. Yet, another external pressure—stemming from the Great Recession of 2008—played a prominent role in the practices of the state and in the responsiveness of PSCC.

Policies on workforce development were one area where neoliberal values replaced cultural values and an emphasis on local Hawaiians. Discussions of workforce development appeared throughout the postsecondary policies of the 1990s and 2000s. Whereas the documents of the 1990s highlighted the necessity for community colleges to meet the needs of the local, state economy (Tsunoda, 1996; UH, 1996, 1999) and focus on partnerships and job training for tourism, agriculture, and technology (major industries for Hawai'i), the policies on workforce development in the 2000s outlined a vision of the UH's community colleges on a more global scale. A report from the UHIC (n.d.) recommended that UH advance "economic growth and future competitiveness" in a "global marketplace" (p. 4). In the case of workforce development, neoliberal values of global competition and marketization were emphasized.

Yet, the social culture of the Hawaiian people acted as a shield to ward off the full replacement of local cultural values with neoliberal values in policies. The UH and its

community colleges did not embrace neoliberalism fully or intact. Although there were values that threatened to replace local cultural values with neoliberal values, the state's higher education policies, overall, blended these discordant values and in some cases reconciled their differences.

At PSCC, the community values and Native Hawaiian traditions, including indigenous ways of knowing, were evident in participants' narratives; nevertheless, economic conditions and imperatives as well as performativity (Ball, 2012) also guided and shaped college behaviors. PSCC combined neoliberal forms of competition, such as outcomes-based approaches, with culturally appropriate values. As noted by a senior UH administrator, in the early 2000s the university's (and the community colleges') mission altered to emphasize Native Hawaiians. At the same time, university and community college performance was guided by quantitative outcome measures.

> [We make] Native Hawaiians a focus of the outcomes measure. . . . There are five measures that have dollars attached to them: Graduates, number of graduates, number of STEM graduates, number of Native Hawaiian graduates, number of Pell recipients.

Furthermore, the university system's strategic plan placed Native Hawaiians as the centerpiece. PSCC had already embraced this ethos (Levin, 2001) but elaborated and extended it in the 2000s as depicted by a Business faculty member.

> We have a Native Hawaiian garden; we have a Native Hawaiian lab. There may be some of that connection happening . . . for them to feel that there is a place for them here. . . . Our buildings are named after Native Hawaiian plants. . . . Our services . . . are named Hawaiian on purpose . . . to say to them, "You're important to us. Our host culture is important to us."

Thus, through the combination of community college values, such as access for underserved populations, and the neoliberal value of performativity, PSCC responded to external pressures and remained loyal to its mission. Indeed, PSCC faculty were socialized into both Hawaiian culture and pedagogy for Native Hawaiian students, as described by a History faculty member.

> I've helped. . . in training and helping faculty who didn't know the Hawaiian culture figure out how to deal with it. . . . There are strategies you can use in the classroom so that you're not singling people out, so that it's not a debate, so it's not competitive; it's more collaborative.

In addition to the socialization to cultural norms, the acquisition of revenues through competitive funding grants was also a necessary component of organizational survival. Nineteen million dollars over 5 years from the National Science Foundation came to PSCC as a result of its status as a Tribal college. A dean identified the advantage of such funds: "We have $19 million in external funding from the National Science Foundation that has been provided to us. . . . That will take us out for the next four or five years." A

senior administrator noted that considerable effort was expended to gain these grants: "We're much greedier about getting grants, and we've been very successful." These grants had a dual function: They enabled PSCC to provide specialized instruction to Native Hawaiian students to move them to the UH and they conformed to state policy for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As well, PSCC sought accreditation to maintain its institutional legitimacy. The ACCJC and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) called for outcomes-based performance measures. Performance was measured through a consideration of the outcomes of the college's programs relative to the system's goals, particularly to graduation numbers and student achievement in program areas, as indicated by a college administrator.

> We have measureable outcomes. . . . It's everything . . . remedial, developmental, math, reading, writing, culinary, dental, EMT, sports science, IT, liberal arts, marketing, medical assistant. . . . In this comprehensive program review . . . they also look at the contribution of the program to the college's strategic outcomes.

However, funding was tied loosely to performance and outcomes.

At PSCC, these performance expectations existed concurrently with social and cultural goals. That is, the pursuit of strategic outcomes such as improved enrollment and program completion for Native Hawaiians was supportive of the mission and values of PSCC as a preserver and promoter of Native Hawaiian culture. As well, the focus upon Native Hawaiians at PSCC solved two problems, both related to the adaptation and survival of the college. First, this focus led to revenues; second, this focus helped PSCC maintain its mission. The system chancellor noted these benefits. "The revenues brought in can benefit all groups: . . . the Native Hawaiian students, other underrepresented students . . . Samoans, and so forth." Furthermore, PSCC implemented targeted efforts to increase Native Hawaiian enrollments as indicated by a senior administrator. "In 2006, [we] made Native Hawaiians our targeted population." The state's workforce development policies were satisfied through the increased enrollment of Native Hawaiians. As such, PSCC was able to maintain its cultural values and comply with federal and state policies on diversity and workforce development. A dean explained the importance of the college's identification with Native Hawaiians.

> There's a benefit to having Native Hawaiian students at [PSCC]. . . . Those funds are used both specifically for Native Hawaiian learners and . . . to create a more Hawaiian place of learning. So, it benefits Hawaiian students . . . but [it] also benefits the institution in terms of enriching what it is we're doing.

In significant contradiction to the neoliberal principles of individualism and an economic and market-based value system (Ball, 2012; Crouch, 2011), PSCC exhibited values that favored the centrality of the education of Native Hawaiians. Faculty contended that historical remediation was needed for a cultural and historical debt owed as a result of the treatment of Native Hawaiians in their state. The attention to the

Hawaiian population through higher education was an effort to pay this debt as indicated by a college counselor. "I think a lot of us feel we have a debt to pay and we are going to make our best effort to pay that debt and to honor the folks who come from that culture."

Thus, PSCC adapted to state policies and funding reductions, yet maintained, to some extent, the logic of the community college. It increased its population of Native Hawaiian students and thus fulfilled an access goal; it provided specialized educational services for this population to ensure that these students would transfer to the UH, and thus PSCC ensured access to further education. Simultaneously, PSCC adopted the logic of the neoliberal state, which demanded both economic service to the state and businesslike performance outcomes.

Three U.S. Colleges and the Effects of State Policies

By the 2000s, institutions had normalized neoliberal practices (Ward, 2012), and following the Great Recession of 2008, reductions in state funding for community colleges reinforced the dependency of these institutions upon the public sector. Although community colleges could in some cases locate new revenue streams, they could not replace state revenues with federal grants or private sector contracts. Yet, community colleges—certainly the three in this investigation—clung to their community college values and the logic of the community college to guide their practices, albeit tenuously. In the face of both funding reductions and calls for and policies aimed at measurable and economic outcomes, however, community colleges were forced to adapt to external pressures from government by diminishing their access mission and adopting, at least in part, the identity of a commercial enterprise (Misiaszek et al., 2011).

The three colleges responded to state policies and actions in differing ways. The California college, SVCC, endeavored to maintain its access principle, but altered its definition of access to a condition of narrow entry to the college. Large class sizes, reduced administrative support for students, and less time for faculty to devote to students (and more time to outcomes assessment, planning, and rationalization of programs) affected the quality of students' education and training. The Washington college, CSCC, endeavored to cope with financial scarcity by efforts to increase enrollment through baccalaureate programs, to generate short-term funding through federal grants (e.g., Title three, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Program), and to recruitment of international students. However, these efforts had both marginal and short-term benefits, and not only the historical role of CSCC as a community college with a training focus was lost but also CSCC's identity as an aspiring transfer institution was blocked. The Hawai'i college, PSCC, encountered considerable financial stress and reacted by the pursuit and acquisition of federal grants and the generation of tuition revenue from international students. Although PSCC accepted the policies of a neoliberal state in accountability measures through their accrediting agency and even participated in a state system performance funding scheme, the college was not swallowed up entirely in a market-driven approach to higher education. The college's efforts to increase access

for Native Hawaiian students and its extensive emphasis upon university transfer for this population signaled a commitment to community college principles not only of access and a local orientation but also, more specifically, to service to disadvantaged populations.

Although for several decades following the Truman Commission of 1947, higher education policies at the federal and state levels saw community colleges as tools that enabled nonprivileged populations to access postsecondary education for economic and social mobility, these views were reconfigured in the early 21st century. The emphasis was upon community colleges' outcomes: students completing a program and obtaining a certificate or diploma—necessary actions as a source of workforce development and the primary goal of these institutions. Some populations, such as full-time high school graduates, were preferred under completion agendas, whereas others, such as part-time developmental students, received less emphasis. As well, some outcomes (e.g., general education) were ignored in the pursuit of an endgame or program completion or graduation (Humphreys, 2012). The policies of the 2000s reflected the state exercising its power over community colleges through funding and accountability strategies. Both state and organizational policy, and organizational behaviors, emphasized program completion (including credentialing) and SLOs with a simultaneous emphasis on workforce and economic development for these colleges to remain competitive globally.

In spite of state policies that focused on efficiency and performativity, individual colleges responded in unique ways to policy demands while they endeavored to maintain their missions and pursue their own goals. For example, the community college in Hawai'i adopted performance measures but made participation and performance of Native Hawaiian students a major focus of their mission and thus blended neoliberal performativity with the community college logic that included access for and service to disadvantaged populations. By building upon an historical, geographical, and sociocultural context, in addition to institutional and organizational norms and values, each college navigated a landscape in which these norms and values often came into conflict with state policy and practices. We note here that a specific listing of the organizational norms and values of each college that played a role in the colleges' negotiations of neoliberal principles is beyond the limits of this investigation and receives attention elsewhere (Levin, 2017). Organizational theory and research on community colleges indicate that differences in responses to external pressures are tied to what organizational members understand as the core of their college (Brown & Humphreys, 2006), and this investigation reinforces theory and research.

Although neoliberalism, and its attendant values and initiatives, is pervasive (Stern, 2012), it is not necessarily monolithic or homogeneous in its effects, as this investigation has demonstrated. Organizational members and their actions influence and shape the reception and acceptance or rejection of state policies and practices. For community colleges, practitioners do not accept the policies and practices of a neoliberal state unadulterated; rather, they endeavor to fit state policy and practices into the patterns of behavior and values that are both compatible with their organizations and the institution of the community college.

Our findings hold implications for community college scholarship and suggest that it would be prudent for researchers to take individual state characteristics into consideration when undertaking research on community colleges. Furthermore, our investigation may call into question the transferability and generalizability of findings in higher education research, generally, that fails to account for state and institutional context. In addition, our investigation holds practical implications for policy makers. Policy makers might be wise to consider the variations in state responses to federal-level community college policy, as each state may respond differently to blanket policies, in that these policies may affect them in various and different ways, for example, tuition-free community college. As well, state policy makers can also note that individual colleges may struggle with new state policies that have embedded logics (e.g., performance funding or the privileging of particular student groups) that cannot be blended at a community college without consequences for mission and purpose of a community college.

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